



MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

AUDIT REPORT



THOMAS H. MCTAVISH, C.P.A.
AUDITOR GENERAL

“...The auditor general shall conduct post audits of financial transactions and accounts of the state and of all branches, departments, offices, boards, commissions, agencies, authorities and institutions of the state established by this constitution or by law, and performance post audits thereof.”

– Article IV, Section 53 of the Michigan Constitution

Audit report information may be accessed at:

<http://audgen.michigan.gov>



Michigan
Office of the Auditor General
REPORT SUMMARY

Performance Audit

Prisoner Education Program

Department of Corrections

Report Number:
47-310-03

Released:
August 2005

The prisoner education program provides educational opportunities for prisoners to take responsibility for developing their academic, work, and social competencies and to assist them to become contributing, positive members of the prison community while incarcerated and productive members of their communities upon release from prison. Educational programs are offered at 41 correctional facilities and at 5 camps.

Audit Objective:

To assess the effectiveness of the Department's administration of the prisoner education program.

Audit Conclusion:

We concluded that the Department was generally effective in its administration of the prisoner education program.

Reportable Conditions:

The Department needs to improve its coordination and Statewide implementation of the best practices used by various facilities to increase prisoners' basic reading, mathematics, writing, and critical thinking skills to a minimum of the general educational development (GED) level (Finding 1).

The facilities had not maintained complete prisoner education files and had not transferred prisoner education files with the prisoners in a timely manner (Finding 2).

The Department had not developed performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the prisoner education program (Finding 3).

The Department had not provided pre-release training to all prisoners prior to their release (Finding 4).

The Department had not developed sufficient policies and procedures to standardize educational programs at the correctional facilities (Finding 5).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Audit Objective:

To assess the efficiency of the Department's operation of the prisoner education program.

Audit Conclusion:

We concluded that the Department was moderately efficient in its operation of the prisoner education program.

Reportable Conditions:

The Department had not identified the educational processes at facilities that more efficiently used prisoner education resources and had not replicated such processes among all facilities with educational programs (Finding 6).

The Department needs to improve its federal grant request procedures to maximize its receipt of available federal funds (Finding 7).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Agency Response:

Our audit report contains 7 findings and 7 corresponding recommendations. The Department's preliminary response indicated that it agrees with 6 and partially agrees with 1 of the recommendations.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A copy of the full report can be
obtained by calling 517.334.8050
or by visiting our Web site at:
<http://audgen.michigan.gov>



Michigan Office of the Auditor General
201 N. Washington Square
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Thomas H. McTavish, C.P.A.
Auditor General

Scott M. Strong, C.P.A., C.I.A.
Deputy Auditor General



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
201 N. WASHINGTON SQUARE
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48913
(517) 334-8050
FAX (517) 334-8079

THOMAS H. MCTAVISH, C.P.A.
AUDITOR GENERAL

August 18, 2005

Ms. Patricia L. Caruso, Director
Department of Corrections
Grandview Plaza Building
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Ms. Caruso:

This is our report on the performance audit of the Prisoner Education Program, Department of Corrections.

This report contains our report summary; description of agency; audit objectives, scope, and methodology and agency responses; comments, findings, recommendations, and agency preliminary responses; two exhibits, presented as supplemental information; and a glossary of acronyms and terms.

Our comments, findings, and recommendations are organized by audit objective. The agency preliminary responses were taken from the agency's responses subsequent to our audit fieldwork. The *Michigan Compiled Laws* and administrative procedures require that the audited agency develop a formal response within 60 days after release of the audit report.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during this audit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas H. McTavish".

Thomas H. McTavish, C.P.A.
Auditor General

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRISONER EDUCATION PROGRAM DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	
Report Summary	1
Report Letter	3
Description of Agency	7
Audit Objectives, Scope, and Methodology and Agency Responses	9
COMMENTS, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSES	
Effectiveness of Administration of the Prisoner Education Program	12
1. General Educational Development (GED) Program	12
2. Prisoner Education Files	13
3. Performance Indicators	15
4. Pre-Release Programs	17
5. Prison Education Policies and Procedures	19
Efficiency of Operation of the Prisoner Education Program	21
6. Use of Educational Program Resources	21
7. Maximization of Federal Funding	24
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION	
Exhibit 1 - Cost Per Prisoner of an Educational Program Completion, Fiscal Year 2002-03	26
Exhibit 2 - Cost Per Prisoner of an Educational Program Completion, Fiscal Year 2001-02	27

GLOSSARY

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

29

Description of Agency

Educational Services organizationally resides within the Correctional Facilities Administration, Department of Corrections, and provides educational programs for incarcerated individuals who qualify and participate.

The mission* of Educational Services is to provide educational opportunities for prisoners to take responsibility for developing their academic, work, and social competencies and to assist them to become contributing, positive members of the prison community while incarcerated and productive members of their communities upon release from prison.

The Department has 44 correctional facilities and 10 camps under its administration. Educational programs are offered at 41 correctional facilities and at 5 camps, with a total enrollment of 12,201 prisoners as of September 30, 2003. The educational programs include:

- The general educational development (GED) and adult basic education programs are provided to qualifying prisoners at all correctional facilities and camps having educational programs.
- Special education and English as a Second Language programs are provided to qualifying prisoners at 12 correctional facilities.
- Career and technical education (CTE) programs in 13 different trades are available to prisoners. Thirty-five correctional facilities offer one or more CTE programs, including auto body repair, auto mechanics, building trades, business education, computer refurbishing, custodial maintenance, electronics, food service and hospitality management, horticulture, machine tool operations, optics, visual graphics, and welding.
- Pre-release programs, including job-seeking skills, social skills, and other life skills, are provided to prisoners as their release dates draw near.

* See glossary at end of report for definition.

Section 791.233 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* states that a prisoner whose minimum term of imprisonment is two years or more, for prisoners sentenced for crimes committed after December 15, 1998, shall not be released on parole unless he or she has either earned a high school diploma or earned its equivalent in the form of a GED certificate. For certain conditions, this requirement may be waived.

As of September 30, 2003, Educational Services employed 3 central administration staff and the prison schools employed approximately 450 teacher, administrative, and clerical staff.

The Department expended \$30.6 million from the State's General Fund and \$1.7 from federal grants on educational programs during fiscal year 2002-03.

Audit Objectives, Scope, and Methodology and Agency Responses

Audit Objectives

Our performance audit* of the Prisoner Education Program, Department of Corrections, had the following objectives:

1. To assess the effectiveness* of the Department's administration of the prisoner education program.
2. To assess the efficiency* of the Department's operation of the prisoner education program.

Audit Scope

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Department's prisoner education program. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

As part of our audit, we prepared supplemental information (Exhibits 1 and 2) that relates to our audit objectives. Our audit was not directed toward expressing an opinion on this information and, accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

Audit Methodology

Our audit procedures, conducted from May through October 2003, included examination of the Department's records and activities primarily for the period October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2003.

To obtain an understanding of the prisoner education program process and to establish our audit methodology, we completed a preliminary review of the Department's education operations. Our preliminary review included interviewing Department personnel; reviewing applicable statutes, policies and procedures, and other reference materials; and visiting two prisons.

* See glossary at end of report for definition.

To accomplish our objectives, we reviewed adult basic education (ABE), general educational development (GED), and career and technical education (CTE) programs at six prisons. We selected these six prisons to provide for representation of ABE, GED, and CTE programs of each regional area, both male and female prison populations, and a variety of GED and CTE completion records.

At the selected prisons, we reviewed prison school attendance records, monthly education reports, student counts, class curriculums, classroom space, prisoner placements, waiting lists, prisoner schedules, prisoner education plans, and progress plotters*. Also, we reviewed teacher, principal, and GED tester qualifications.

We performed tests of the program statistics produced from the student database at each prison visited. We also tested the accuracy of the Department's school statistics report that is submitted to the Legislature.

We examined records of parolees who entered prison after December 15, 1998 and were paroled in 2003 for compliance with the Department's mission to have prisoners obtain a GED prior to parole. Also, we reviewed completions of pre-release programs prior to prisoner paroles.

Agency Responses

Our audit report contains 7 findings and 7 corresponding recommendations. The Department's preliminary response indicated that it agrees with 6 and partially agrees with 1 of the recommendations.

The agency preliminary response that follows each recommendation in our report was taken from the agency's written comments and oral discussion subsequent to our audit fieldwork. Section 18.1462 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* and Department of Management and Budget Administrative Guide procedure 1280.02 require the Department of Corrections to develop a formal response to our audit findings and recommendations within 60 days after release of the audit report.

* See glossary at end of report for definition.

COMMENTS, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSES

EFFECTIVENESS OF ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRISONER EDUCATION PROGRAM

COMMENT

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness of the Department of Corrections' administration of the prisoner education program.

Conclusion: We concluded that the Department was generally effective in its administration of the prisoner education program. However, our assessment disclosed reportable conditions* related to the general educational development (GED) program, prisoner education files, performance indicators*, pre-release programs, and prison education policies and procedures (Findings 1 through 5).

FINDING

1. General Educational Development (GED) Program

The Department needs to improve its coordination and Statewide implementation of the best practices used by various facilities to increase prisoners' basic reading, mathematics, writing, and critical thinking skills to a minimum of the GED certificate level.

Such best practices would assist the Department in accomplishing its prisoner education goal* and returning prisoners who entered prison without a GED certificate to their communities with GED certificates.

The goal of the Department's prisoner education program is to provide programs that encourage and assist prisoners to become contributing members of the community by:

- Increasing the prisoners' basic reading, mathematics, writing, and critical thinking skills to the minimum of the GED certificate level.
- Increasing the prisoners' employment and job skills.

During our field visits, we identified certain educational processes which may be best practices, including incentive-based learning, study halls, specialized classes,

* See glossary at end of report for definition.

specialized curriculums, increased use of tutors, and enhanced GED examination frequency. However, the Department had not fully studied and evaluated these practices.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Department improve its coordination and Statewide implementation of the best practices used by various facilities to increase prisoners' basic reading, mathematics, writing, and critical thinking skills to a minimum of the GED certificate level.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Department agrees and informed us that it will continue to integrate best practices used by various facilities into its GED programming as it works to achieve and maintain standardization of the program.

The Department informed us that its Education Steering Committee and curriculum committees continue to review and discuss the most appropriate and effective delivery of GED programming and that practices determined to be best practices are piloted or implemented Statewide. The Department also informed us that potential best practices are referred to the committees by school principals. The Department further informed us that the school audit process, which involves on-site reviews of each facility at least every three years by a team of experienced educators, provides an opportunity to identify potential best practices as well as undesired or ineffective practices that should be eliminated.

In addition, the Department stated that it is important to note that not all best practices can be implemented at each facility and that space, staffing, and security issues make it difficult to achieve uniform implementation of certain practices.

FINDING

2. Prisoner Education Files

The facilities had not maintained complete prisoner education files and had not transferred prisoner education files with the prisoners in a timely manner.

A lack of prisoner education documentation can result in ineffective and inefficient use of educational resources and services, such as duplicating teacher efforts,

placing prisoners in inappropriate levels of learning, and extending the time to complete educational programs.

Prisoner education files are the only record documenting prisoners' educational efforts. We reviewed 235 prisoner education files at six correctional facilities. We noted that 213 (91%) files did not contain all required documentation. The missing documentation included:

- a. Of the 235 files, 189 (80%) files were missing lists of all educational classes completed or enrolled in by the prisoner.
- b. Of the 108 files for the prisoners who should have had a teacher-completed progress plotter, 61 (56%) did not contain the required progress plotters. Also, 56 (69%) of 81 prisoner files tested did not contain other required documentation of the prisoners' educational progress.
- c. Of the 232 files for prisoners required to have education program plans*, 142 (61%) files did not have education program plans completed when the prisoners entered an educational program at the facility. Also, of the 139 files for prisoners who required quarterly evaluation, 42 (30%) files did not contain the required quarterly evaluations.

In addition, the entire prisoner education file for 9 (35%) of 26 prisoners recently transferred among facilities did not accompany these prisoners.

The Department created policies and operating procedures related to education files, such as Department policy directive 05.02.112 and operating procedure 05.02.112, which provide for the prompt and orderly creation, maintenance, and transfer of prisoner education files. However, these policies and procedures did not provide specific guidance regarding implementation. As a result, correctional facilities' principals and school secretaries developed their own implementation interpretations.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommended that the facilities maintain complete prisoner education files and transfer prisoner education files with the prisoners in a timely manner.

* See glossary at end of report for definition.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Department agrees and informed us that it has taken steps to comply. The Department informed us that it has implemented a new database system called the Offender Education Tracking System (OETS) that records the classes that each prisoner completed or was enrolled in. The Department also informed us that OETS contains a monitoring module to assist in ensuring that educational program plans and quarterly and final evaluations have been completed for each prisoner. The Department further informed us that OETS will also assist in providing timely educational programming information to receiving institutions upon transfer of prisoners as receiving institutions now have access to prisoner education information even if the physical file has not yet arrived.

The Department stated that it has developed a principal and school secretary manual and has provided training to principals and school secretaries to improve compliance with recordkeeping requirements. The Department also stated that principals and school secretaries are required to ensure the completeness of prisoner education files prior to transfer and to forward prisoner education files within five business days of transfer. In addition, the Department informed us that it is reviewing its education program recordkeeping requirements to eliminate maintenance of any redundant or unnecessary information.

FINDING

3. Performance Indicators

The Department had not developed performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the prisoner education program.

This lack of performance indicators impacted the Department's ability to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the program and identify needed program changes.

The Department compiles and reports educational output related statistics for each correctional facility on a monthly basis. These statistics relate to the number of successful GED certificate completions, number of GED examinations given, number of career and technical education (CTE) program completions, number of teachers, and number of students. However, the Department did not use this data to analyze and evaluate ongoing facility educational activity effectiveness.

The Department could use the data to establish performance indicators, such as:

- Increase in prisoner test scores.
- Changes in percent of prisoners successfully completing the GED examination who do not possess a GED.
- Changes in percent of prisoners attempting the GED examination who do not possess a GED.
- Changes in percent of prisoners enrolled in academic programs who need such programming.
- Changes in percent of prisoners successfully completing a CTE program or CTE certifications in relation to a Department standard.

Performance indicators would allow for a comparison and reporting of actual data with desired outputs and outcomes and recommendations to improve effectiveness and efficiency or change the desired performance indicators.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Department develop performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the prisoner education program.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Department agrees in part. The Department informed us that it had developed some performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the prisoner education program but acknowledges that it can further improve the performance evaluation process.

The Department informed us that the school audit process, which involves on-site reviews of each facility at least every three years by a team of experienced educators, includes evaluation of several performance indicators or factors. The Department informed us that the fiscal year 2002-03 pre-established school audit factors included: minimum GED completions for the year are at least 20% of the September 30 enrollment and minimum CTE core program completions for the year are at least 20% of September enrollment. Per the Department, fiscal year 2000-01

pre-established school audit factors included: the number of students passing the GED test increased 5% when compared to the prior year and the number of students passing the core component of each CTE program increased 5% when compared to the prior year. The Department informed us that the results of the audits are used to identify needed changes in practice or curriculum.

In addition, the Department informed us that pilot programs have been established in various facilities where data is gathered and recommendations are made based on the data. The Department also informed us that the recommendations are forwarded to the Education Steering Committee and curriculum committees for appropriate action.

The Department stated that it can further improve the process by which it gathers and analyzes educational data as a basis to establish additional relevant performance indicators and to identify needed program changes. The Department also stated that it has implemented OETS. Per the Department, OETS will allow the Department to more efficiently and effectively capture and analyze educational data.

In addition, the Department informed us that in fiscal year 2001-02, the Department of Labor and Economic Growth began requiring reporting of performance data into the Michigan Adult Education Reporting System that will allow measurement of indicators such as educational gain, student retention, and goal attainment. The Department will use this data to establish additional relevant performance indicators and to identify needed program changes.

FINDING

4. Pre-Release Programs

The Department had not provided pre-release training to all prisoners prior to their release.

Pre-release training offers prisoners opportunities to take responsibility for developing academic, work, and social competencies that help the prisoners become contributing, productive members of the prison community while incarcerated and contributing members of the community upon release from prison. One of the objectives of the prisoner education program is to increase the prisoners' interpersonal skills.

Our review of pre-release programs at 6 correctional facilities disclosed:

- a. Of the 6 facilities, 2 (33%) did not have pre-release programs.
- b. Of 42 prisoner education files reviewed for prisoners who were paroled from these facilities, 29 (69%) files indicated that the parolee had not completed a pre-release program prior to parole.
- c. Of 56 prisoners enrolled in pre-release programs at the time of our testing, 13 (23%) prisoners from one facility had earliest release dates ranging from 13 months to 9 years from the date of the program. The usefulness of pre-release materials diminishes the longer it is from program completion to release.

Pre-release programs include assembling and distributing informational material on locations within the prisoners' community where newly released prisoners can find shelter, job training, job placement services, and various other governmental and nonprofit services. In addition, the pre-release programs provide training to enhance prisoners' interpersonal skills, such as interviewing skills, employment application completion skills, job retention skills, community interaction skills, and other life skills.

During our audit period, the Department placed the responsibility for pre-release programs with each facility. Many facilities continued the pre-release programs, and the prisoner education program continued to report the pre-release program enrollment data with the other school data during fiscal years 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03. In 2003, the prisoner education program initiated a revised pre-release program curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Department provide pre-release training to all prisoners prior to their release.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Department agrees and informed us that it has complied. The Department stated that it should be noted that the prisoner education program was not responsible for pre-release programming during the audit period. The Department

informed us that in December 2003, a standardized pre-release program was developed for education staff at facilities through the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative with input from the Education Vocational Training and Employment Committee. The Department informed us that facility education staff received training for the program and will receive updated training on a periodic basis. In addition, the Department informed us that facility education staff have been instructed to provide pre-release programming within one year of the prisoners earliest release date.

FINDING

5. Prison Education Policies and Procedures

The Department had not developed sufficient policies and procedures to standardize educational programs at the correctional facilities. As a result, the correctional facilities used a variety of methods to perform many of the day-to-day educational related activities.

Policies and procedures are a management tool designed to help ensure that staff perform their jobs in a method that meets the mission, values, and guiding principles of the Department.

Our review of educational program activities at the six correctional facilities visited disclosed:

- a. Five (83%) facilities did not derive their attendance sheets from the Student Database (SDB). Also, of the 1,368 students on the SDB enrollment lists, 92 (7%) were not on the teachers' attendance sheets. The attendance sheets are used to develop the monthly school statistics report. Requiring the use of SDB-generated attendance sheets would provide the Department and the facilities with standardized and more accurate monthly reports.
- b. Two (33%) facilities incorrectly included CTE partial completions within the count of CTE core completions. The school statistics report for June 2003 shows 62 rather than the 57 monthly CTE core completions, thus overstating the report by 8%. Also, the report overstated year-to-date CTE core completions by 11%. Specifying the definition of a course completion would help ensure the accuracy of the school statistics report.

- c. Most of the facilities' teachers did not monitor students' progress on the Department's computer-based learning tools, such as Destinations, SkillsBank, or English as a Second Language software. Teachers assign lessons to students based on the level of learning each individual student has attained. As lessons are completed, the teacher assigns new lessons based on the student's capabilities. At one facility, it was a teacher's practice to assign students multiple lessons and not monitor students' progress until the students requested more work. Requiring teachers to review and store student progress during computer-based learning using a pre-established, regular time frame would enhance the monitoring of student progress.
- d. One (17%) facility that performed cell study* did not maintain records of visits made to students who participate in cell study. Teachers are allotted time to spend with students who are held in segregation. Requiring cell study teachers to maintain a log of cell visits would enable the principal to monitor the teachers' activities and time spent with the students. Such an oversight function could increase the productivity of a teacher.
- e. None of the facilities maintained records of substitute teachers. The facilities could not provide documentation of training or teacher certificates for their substitute teachers. Requiring the maintenance of substitute teacher records would help ensure that qualified teachers are being used.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Department develop sufficient policies and procedures to standardize educational programs at the correctional facilities.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Department agrees and informed us that it has taken steps to improve standardization of educational programming. The Department stated that, although there is a need for some additional instruction or procedures, standardization can be best achieved through implementation of automated systems and monitoring of procedures. The Department informed us that it replaced SDB in July 2004 with OETS. The Department informed us that OETS, together with the Offender Management Callout System, which is currently being implemented Statewide, will

* See glossary at end of report for definition.

provide the Department with accurate attendance information as facility school attendance will be linked to the facilities' prisoner count process.

The Department informed us that OETS, along with the development of the principal and school secretary manual and training, will assist the Department in maintaining standard core completion data. The Department stated that it should be noted that the Department had identified the problem with recording supplemental completions incorrectly during school audits and, because students work in both textbooks and on the computer, teachers are required to record student progress on standardized progress plotters, which record the dates and scores of each achievement. The Department informed us that it has instructed school principals to ensure that students' progress is monitored and documented. The Department further informed us that cell study and the use of substitute teachers are being eliminated.

EFFICIENCY OF OPERATION OF THE PRISONER EDUCATION PROGRAM

COMMENT

Audit Objective: To assess the efficiency of the Department's operation of the prisoner education program.

Conclusion: We concluded that the Department was moderately efficient in its operation of the prisoner education program. Our assessment disclosed reportable conditions related to the use of educational program resources and the maximization of federal funding (Findings 6 and 7).

FINDING

6. Use of Educational Program Resources

The Department had not identified the educational processes at facilities that more efficiently used prisoner education resources and had not replicated such processes among all facilities with educational programs.

As a result, the cost per prisoner of an educational program completion among facilities ranged from \$1,907 to \$27,039 for fiscal year 2002-03 (see Exhibit 1) and from \$2,875 to \$32,378 for fiscal 2001-02 (see Exhibit 2).

If all facilities with educational programs followed comparable educational processes for class size, classroom hours of instruction per teacher, class schedules (e.g., five days a week), standard progress plotters, and student progress reviews, the cost of completing an educational program at each correctional facility should be relatively comparable.

However, our review of six correctional facilities' educational processes disclosed inconsistencies among these facilities in all processing areas.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Department identify the educational processes at facilities that more efficiently use prisoner education resources and replicate such processes among all facilities with educational programs.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Department agrees but does not agree with the auditors' use of Exhibits 1 and 2 to imply that some facilities were more efficient than others.

The Department stated that the wide variation in cost per educational program completion is a result of many factors. For example, the Department stated that because educational program completions include both GED completions and CTE completions, facilities with highly active CTE programs generally have a lower average cost per completion. The Department stated that this is because CTE programs can generally be completed within a few months while GED completions generally take many months and, in some cases, years for prisoners to achieve. In addition, the Department stated that some facilities' expenditures, such as the Robert Scott Correctional Facility, included start-up costs related to facility conversion. Further, the Department stated that the cost per completion methodology used by the auditors does not recognize that most prisoners' beginning education levels are equivalent to elementary school levels and that some facilities have a much higher percentage of elementary education level prisoners than other facilities. The Department indicated that, in public school systems, an elementary school would not be evaluated against a high school using graduation rates as the measurement. The Department stated that the auditors' cost analysis recognizes no benefit for educational gain short of GED or CTE completion. The Department also stated that some facilities offer special education programs, while others do not. The Department further stated that the auditors'

cost analysis recognizes no benefit for special education programming. In addition, the Department stated that facilities that provide educational programming to high security prisoners face challenges in terms of security requirements and prisoner behavior that contribute to higher costs. The Department also stated that facility education costs can also be impacted by other variables, such as the average age of a facility's population or higher concentrations of certain population types resulting from other programs offered by the facility.

The Department indicated that it is important to note that the Department served a minimum of 12,000 prisoners during each of the fiscal years. Per the Department, using expenditure and enrollment data for fiscal year 2002-03, the average cost per GED and CTE enrollment was approximately \$2,600 per student.

However, the Department stated that it is cognizant of the need to deliver educational programs in the most efficient manner possible throughout the Department. Therefore, the Department will comply with the recommendation by measuring and comparing costs or resources expended to achieve completions or achievements on a program-by-program basis. The Department informed us that OETS will allow the Department to more effectively obtain data to perform such an analysis. The analysis will be used to assist the Department in identifying and replicating efficient educational processes as well as identifying and resolving barriers that hinder program efficiency.

EPILOGUE

The exhibits are representative of education program completion costs based on Department expenditure data recorded in the State's accounting system. The Department had not recorded sufficient cost information regarding the prisoner education program to allow for separate analyses of GED, CTE, or other education program completions.

Notwithstanding, the educational cost analyses considered all education program completions as outcomes. Excluding CTE completions from the analyses would generally reflect a higher cost of completion for GED programs.

FINDING

7. Maximization of Federal Funding

The Department needs to improve its federal grant request procedures to maximize its receipt of available federal funds.

For fiscal year 2001-02, the Department did not collect \$540,000 in federal grant funds. This amount of federal grant funds could have funded approximately 7.5 teacher positions.

The Department provided educational program services to many Title I (Program for Neglected and Delinquent Children) eligible students. This Program provides funding for teaching prisoners under 21 years of age in adult correctional facilities.

Instead of requesting federal program reimbursement for the teaching of all 358 Title I students eligible as of September 30, 2002, the Department sought reimbursement for only 1.5 full-time equated teachers at two correctional facilities with only approximately 50 eligible students.

RECOMMENDATION

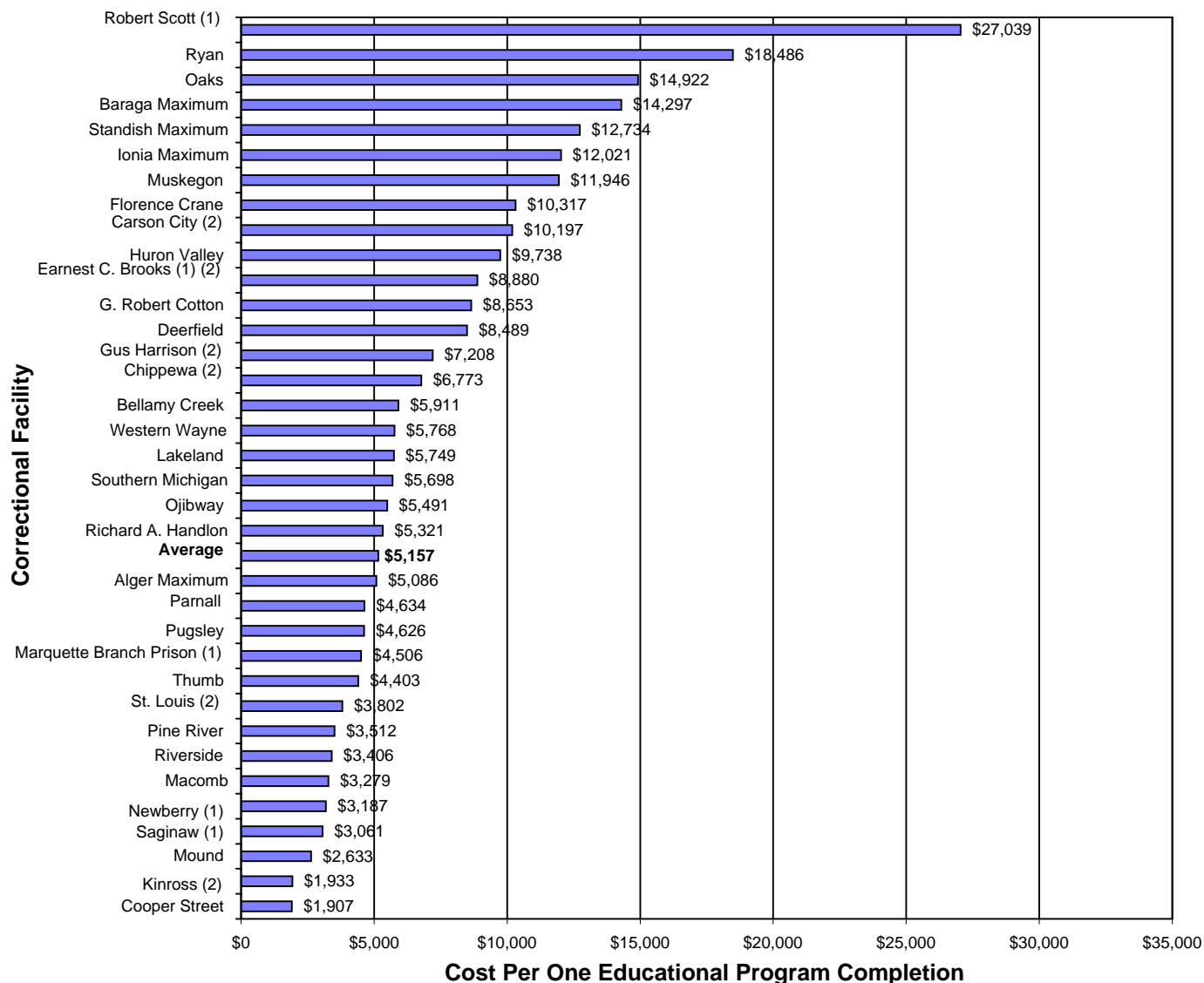
We recommend that the Department improve its federal grant request procedures to maximize its receipt of available federal funds.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

The Department agrees and informed us that it has taken steps to comply. The Department also informed us that OETS will assist the Department by providing better data to maximize federal funding. The Department further informed us that it has hired grant-funded student interns to assist with data collection. In addition, the Department informed us that the Education Section and curriculum committees will continue to review grant availability and eligibility.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

PRISONER EDUCATION PROGRAM
Department of Corrections
Cost Per Prisoner of an Educational Program Completion
Fiscal Year 2002-03



Educational program completion figures derived from the Department's school statistics reports.

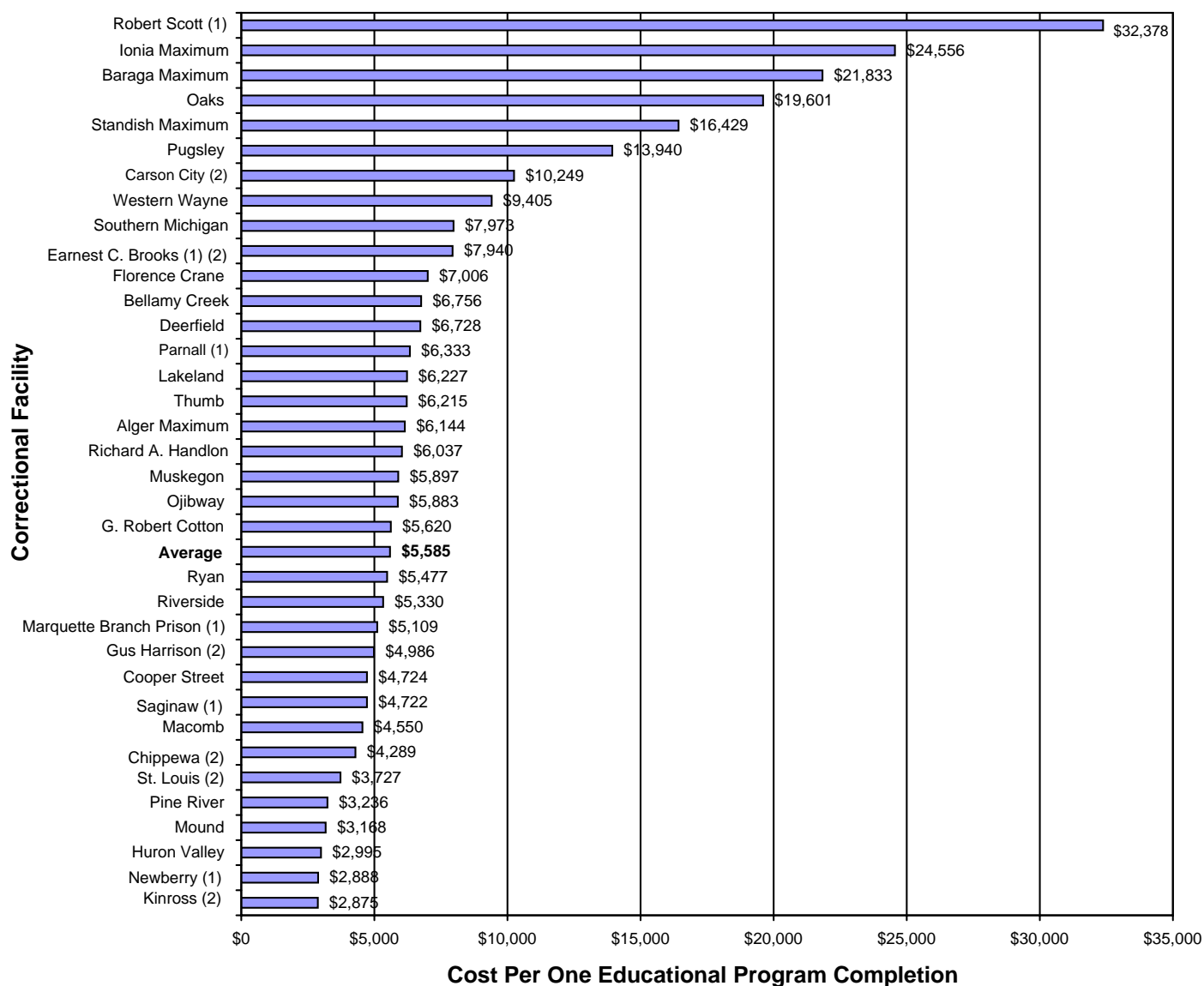
Findings 1 and 6 provide information that should be read in conjunction with this chart.

We compared the educational expenditures per facility with the number of educational program completions using educational cost and completion data available within the Department. A lower cost per completion is indicative of a higher number of completions per amount expended and indicative of a facility that may have more efficient educational processes, as noted in Finding 6. The chart compares educational program expenditures against an outcome (GED or vocational program completion) and does not compare costs of educational activities, such as cost per attempted GED, because the Department did not have this information available, as noted in Finding 3.

(1) We visited this correctional facility during our audit fieldwork.

(2) This correctional facility maintains records for more than one facility.

PRISONER EDUCATION PROGRAM
Department of Corrections
Cost Per Prisoner of an Educational Program Completion
Fiscal Year 2001-02



Educational program completion figures derived from the Department's school statistics reports.

Findings 1 and 6 provide information that should be read in conjunction with this chart.

We compared the educational expenditures per facility with the number of educational program completions using educational cost and completion data available within the Department. A lower cost per completion is indicative of a higher number of completions per amount expended and indicative of a facility that may have more efficient educational processes, as noted in Finding 6. The chart compares educational program expenditures against an outcome (GED or vocational program completion) and does not compare costs of educational activities, such as cost per attempted GED, because the Department did not have this information available, as noted in Finding 3.

(1) We visited this correctional facility during our audit fieldwork.

(2) This correctional facility maintains records for more than one facility.

GLOSSARY

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

ABE	adult basic education.
cell study	A learning approach in which the prisoner remains in the cell and the teacher goes to the cell to teach.
CTE	career and technical education.
education program plan	A written plan of goals and objectives prepared by the education staff for each prisoner classified to receive educational programming (form CSJ-363A).
effectiveness	Program success in achieving mission and goals.
efficiency	Achieving the most outputs and outcomes practical with the minimum amount of resources.
GED	general educational development.
goals	The agency's intended outcomes or impacts for a program to accomplish its mission.
mission	The agency's main purpose or the reason that the agency was established.
OETS	Offender Education Tracking System.
performance audit	An economy and efficiency audit or a program audit that is designed to provide an independent assessment of the performance of a governmental entity, program, activity, or function to improve public accountability and to facilitate decision making by parties responsible for overseeing or initiating corrective action.

performance indicators	Information of a quantitative or qualitative nature used to assess achievement of goals and/or objectives.
progress plotter	A form, subject specific (reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.), containing a detailed list of the fundamental elements (sentence structure, use of verbs, capitalization, punctuation, etc.), that compose the subject, for use in tracking a student's achievement of each fundamental element.
reportable condition	A matter that, in the auditor's judgment, represents either an opportunity for improvement or a significant deficiency in management's ability to operate a program in an effective and efficient manner.
SDB	Student Database.

